Christmas Missal

May this holy Christmas
bring you in richest measure
the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ
whose birthday we celebrate together
as we assemble about His altar.
The Divine Saviour grant you and yours
His blessing now and each day

Translated and Arranged by Most Reverend
Aloisius J. Muench, D.D., Archbishop,
Bishop of Fargo, Apostolic Nuncio in Germany

CHRISTMAS DAY

The Nativity of Our Lord

Thoughts for the Day

TODAY we celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Word of God who was with God the Father from all eternity, and like him is God. This Word was made flesh and dwelt among us that we might have life, and have it abundantly.

With the shepherds and the wise men from the East we adore him because he is "true God from true God." In his divine person he unites two natures: the divine nature which he derived from all eternity from his Father, and the human nature which he took from Mary ever Virgin.

Jesus is his name: it means Saviour. He came to save us from sin, and thus change us from children of darkness into children of light. For he is the light of the world, "true light from true light."

He came as Prince of Peace in order that by his reign of justice and love a true, lasting peace might come to men. He came as Lord and King of the universe to whom all men, the lowly as well as the mighty, must bow in reverence and obedience for the maintenance of sound order in the world.

In the light of these simple facts and

solemn truths about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must pray with earnest and fervent devotion the prayers of the Christmas Masses; read with pious and serious attention the passages from the Holy Scriptures selected for the epistles and gospels of this festive day; sing out of loving and ardent hearts the songs of joy which Holy Mother Church gives us in order that we may make holiday on this joyous day of our Lord. In truth, has there ever lived a Man whose birthday the whole world celebrates, and that now for nineteen hundred years? Praise be to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Make it, then, a day of genuine joy by observing it in the spirit of Christ. Renew your friendship with him; and be firmly resolved to "put away an ungodly life and worldly lusts," and to live a "sensible, just, and holy life." In this way you will keep the joy and peace of Christmas in your heart not only today but every day of the year that lies ahead.

"In this has the love of God been shown to us that God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him. Beloved, if God has so loved us, we too must love one another." First Letter of St. John 4:9, 11.

FIRST MASS AT MIDNIGHT

LEAVING the darkness of night, symbol of sin, we enter the church, flooded with festive lights, to participate in the sacred rites of Holy Mass in honor of the birth of him who is the Light of the world. He was born into this world in order that we, children of darkness before our liberation from sin, might become children of light — children of grace and virtue.

The directions for the celebrant, his ministers, and servers, and for the congregation are printed in italics. The order is that of a High Mass: simple, without special ministers; or solemn, in which the celebrant is assisted by deacon and subdeacon; or pontifical, celebrated by a bishop. The celebrant is indicated by C, and the responses given to his prayers, by R. For the sake of decorum, order, and beauty of the Lord's service, follow carefully the directions on when to stand, kneel, or sit.

FOREPART OF THE MASS

At the Foot of the Altar

As the celebrant goes to the foot of the altar for the opening prayers of the Mass, rise and remain standing until he bows or genuflects. Then kneel down. Prelates, however, who are present, stand. Sign yourself with the sign of the cross, and say:

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. AMEN.

The celebrant and the ministers or servers recite alternately Psalm 42: 1–5:

Celebrant: I will go to the altar of God:
Response: To God, my joy since the days of my youth.
Give judgment in my cause, O God: Pronounce sentence in my favor against a godless people.
From false and crafty men deliver me.
For thou, God, art my strength.
Why hast thou cast me off? Why leave me sad at heart, with foes oppressing me?
Send forth thy light and thy truth that they lead me to thy holy hill, and bring me to thy temple.
There will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy since the days of my youth.
There, upon my harp, I shall sing thy praise: God, thou my God!
May you, then, be sad my heart?
Downcast still, and not at peace?
Trust in God. Indeed, I shall not cease to praise him, My Saviour and my God.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
C. I will go to the altar of God:
R. To God, my joy since the days of my youth.
C. Our help is in the name of the Lord,
R. Who made heaven and earth.

The celebrant now makes an act of contrition by reciting the Confiteor; *after which he begs a prayer for himself. All respond:*

R. Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. *C.* Amen (that is, may it so be granted).

The congregation now makes an act of contrition. Holy Mass is something most sacred. With a truly contrite heart we should offer the Holy Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore, with sincere sorrow for sins committed pray:

I CONFESS to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed. *Strike your breast three times, saying:* Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech the blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, Father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

C. Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. *R.* Amen.

C. May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness, and remission of our sins. *R.* Amen.

C. Turn to us, God, and give us new life.

R. Then thy people will rejoice in thee.

C. Show us, Lord, thy mercy.
R. And favor us with thy saving grace.
C. Lord, hear my prayer.
R. Let my cry come to thee.
C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

The celebrant ascends the altar. All rise and stand. He asks you to pray with him:

LET US pray: Lord, we pray thee, take from us our sins, and make us worthy to enter with pure hearts into the Holy of Holies: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

By the merits of thy saints, whose relics lie here, and of all thy saints, be pleased, we pray thee, Lord, to forgive me all my sins.

In a solemn or pontifical High Mass the celebrant incenses the altar after blessing the incense, saying: Blessing on thee from him in whose honor you shall burn. Amen. *All remain standing.*

INTROIT Psalm 2:7, 1 All stand

For the Introit *of the second Christmas Mass turn to page 40, and for that of the third Mass to page 47.*

IN THE Introit our Father in heaven himself speaks to us, recalling to our minds the eternal birth of his only-begotten Son. The little Babe in the crib is more than man: he is true God of the true God. Unforgivable, then, is it not, that men rise against him in rebellion and plot against him in schemes of folly?

Make the sign of the cross as you say:

THE Lord said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. *Psalm 2:1.* Why do nations talk and act like mad? Why do men plot schemes of folly? *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. *Repeat:* The Lord said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

PRAYER FOR MERCY — All stand

OUT of the depths of your heart, in sorrow for your sins and for those of others, send your cry for mercy heavenward. Certainly today, on his birthday, the Lord will hear it. For he is Jesus, the Saviour — your Saviour.

C. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.
R. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.
C. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.
R. Christ, have mercy.	Christe, eléison.
C. Christ, have mercy.	Christe, eléison.
R. Christ, have mercy.	Christe, eléison.
C. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.
R. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.
C. Lord, have mercy.	Kýrie, eléison.

The Gloria

SUNG by the angels, the night in which Christ was born, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* resounds today throughout Christendom. A perfect Christmas hymn, it gives praise and adoration to the Lord, and once more entreats his mercy. Recite it today with special joy, devotion, and confidence in your heart; indeed, recite it often in life, particularly in dark hours of trial.

Standing, all present pray the Gloria ***with the celebrant:***

GLORY be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise thee. We bless thee. We adore thee. We glorify thee. We thank thee for thy great glory: Lord and God, King of heaven, God the Father almighty.

Lord Jesus Christ, thou only-begotten Son. Lord and God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Thou takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Thou takest away the sins of the world, accept our prayer. Thou sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For thou alone art the holy one. Thou alone art the Lord. Thou alone, Jesus Christ. art the Most High, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

When the celebrant sits down the congregation does the same. When the choir chants: **Adoramus te; Gratias agimus tibi; Jesu Christe; suscipe deprecationem nostram,** *all bow their heads. All rise when the celebrant does so, and stand to receive his greeting:*

C. The Lord be with you.

R. And with you also.

Prayers for the Church

For the **Prayers, Epistle, Interlude,** *and* **Gospel** *of the second Christmas Mass turn to pp. 41 ff, and for those of the third Mass to pp. 48 ff.*

First Prayer — All stand

LET us pray: God, thou hast made this most holy night brilliant with the brightness of the True Light. We pray thee grant that in heaven we may have a share in the joys of that Light whose sacred things we have come to know on earth: who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle

THE Son of God took our human nature in order to be for us a pattern of virtuous living. Fashion your life according to his, and thus prepare yourself for the life in which you place your blessed hope — everlasting life.

In a solemn and pontifical Mass the subdeacon chants the Epistle. The congregation sits until the beginning of the Gospel.

EPISTLE Titus 2:11–15 All sit

BELOVED: God's gift, our Saviour, has come to all men alike. He teaches us to put away an unholy life and worldly lusts, and to live in this present world a sensible, just, and holy life. In the meantime, we look forward with joyful hope to the glorious coming of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us that he might deliver us from all evil, and thus make for himself an acceptable people, cleansed from sin and active in doing good works. This should be thy message, this thy exhortation, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

INTERLUDE Psalm 109:3, 1

THE Interlude, also called Gradual, is a chant between the Epistle and the Gospel. In solemn tones it recalls once more the basic truth of Christianity of the eternal birth, the divine majesty, and the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ lest he be regarded only a man. He is the Lord of Lords, the Ruler of the universe to whom all must bow in reverence and obedience.

ROYAL dignity is thine from the day of thy birth amid the glorious light of heaven's holy sanctuary. Even as dew, born before the rising of the morning sun, have I

begotten thee. *V.* The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand until I put thy enemies as a footstool under thy feet. * Alleluia, alleluia. *V. Psalm 2:7.* The Lord said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Alleluia.

The Gospel

Preparatory Prayer

Bowed in reverence, the celebrant prays silently:

PURIFY my heart and my lips, almighty God, even as thou didst purify the lips of the prophet Isaias with a live coal. In thy gracious mercy be pleased to cleanse me also so that I may be made worthy to proclaim thy holy Gospel: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE Lord be in my heart and on my lips so that I may announce his Gospel in a becoming and worthy manner. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

In a solemn or pontifical High Mass the celebrant blesses the incense. Then the deacon, kneeling, prays as did the celebrant: Purify my heart. . . . *Rising, the deacon takes the book of the Gospels and begs the celebrant for the blessing:*

Please, Father, your blessing.

C. The Lord be in your heart and on your lips so that you may announce his Gospel in a becoming and worthy manner. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

GOSPEL Luke 2:1–14

THE birth of the greatest and mightiest in the long history of men has never been described with such touching simplicity as that of our Saviour Jesus Christ. With the angels we glorify God, and adore him with Mary, his happy mother, blessed Joseph, and the thrice favored shepherds.

The congregation rises to receive the greeting:

C. The Lord be with you.

R. And with you also.

C. From the holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

R. To thee, Lord, be glory.

AT THAT time Caesar Augustus gave an order that a census be taken in the whole world. This was the first census; it was made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria.

For the registration each one was required to go to his home town. Therefore, Joseph went from Nazareth in Galilee to the town of David in Judaea, called Bethlehem, because he was of the line and family of David. Mary, his espoused wife, blest with child, went with him.

While they were there, the time came for her delivery, and she gave birth to her first-born son. Wrapping him in swaddling clothes, she laid him in a manger because

there was no room for them in the inn.

Now, out in the fields in that region, there were shepherds who were keeping night watch over their flocks. On a sudden an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brilliant light of God shone about them. Great fear seized them.

But the angel said to them: Fear not. Behold, I bring good news of great joy, meant for all the people: Today, in the town of David, the Saviour has been born for you, who is Christ the Lord. This shall be the sign by which you will know him: You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there were with the angel legions of other angels giving praise to God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.

R. Praise be to thee, Christ.

C. May the words of the Gospel blot out our sins.

The Creed

WITH all the Church in Christendom proclaim your faith today in praise and adoration of him who brought you the precious gift of faith that believing in him you may obtain eternal life.

Stand for the recitation of the Creed.

I BELIEVE in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and Maker of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages: God from God, light from light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made, he is of one essence with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven. *All genuflect.* He was made flesh by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary: AND WAS MADE MAN. He was crucified, too, for our sake under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will return in glory as Judge of the living and the dead, and of his rule there will be no end.

I believe also in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Together with the Father and the Son he is adored and glorified. He spoke through the prophets.

I believe likewise in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I hold belief in one baptism for the remission of sins, and look forward to the resurrection of the dead and to the life of the world to come. Amen.

When the celebrant sits down, all do the same. Today, on Christmas, at the words: Et incarnatus est. . . . Et homo factus est *all kneel. At the words:* Jesum Christum *and* Simul adoratur *all bow their heads. Rise when the celebrant goes to the altar.*

THE OFFERTORY

THE greatest gift of our Father in heaven to us poor sinners is his only-begotten Son. It is his Christmas gift. None could be more precious. In return let your Christmas gift to him be yourself: your mind, your will, your heart, your whole being. Make this complete offering of yourself as you recite now the prayers of the Offertory.

Stand to receive the greeting:

C. The Lord be with you.

R. And with you also.

OFFERTORY CHANT Psalm 95:11, 13

The congregation sits down. For the **Offertory Chant** *of the second Christmas Mass turn to p. 43 and for the third to p. 51.*

OREMUS: Let us pray: Heavens, ring with joy; and earth, be glad to greet the Lord: For he is here.

OFFERING OF THE BREAD

HOLY Father, almighty, eternal God, kindly accept this spotless gift of sacrifice. Although thy unworthy servant, I present it to thee, my living and true God, for my unnumbered sins, misdeeds, and failures. I offer it for all present here as well as for the faithful in Christ, living and dead. May it bring salvation to me and to them for life everlasting. Amen.

Mingling of Wine and Water

O GOD, thou hast invested man with wondrous dignity, and hast restored him yet more wondrously. Grant that, through the sacramental rite of this water and wine, we may have a share in the divine nature of him who lowered himself so as to have a share in our human nature, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord: who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

Offering of the Wine

WE OFFER thee, Lord, the chalice of salvation and implore thy kind mercy: let our offering rise up like a sweet odor to the presence of thy divine majesty, and grant that it bring salvation to us and to the whole world. Amen.

Offering of Ourselves

HUMBLE of spirit and contrite of heart, may we be received with favor by thee, Lord. May this our sacrifice be such in thy sight on this day as to please thee, Lord and God.

COME, thou Sanctifier, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrificial offering, prepared in honor of thy holy name.

In a solemn or pontifical High Mass a number of incensations are made. First the incense is blessed, the celebrant saying:

AT THE intercession of blessed Michael the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all his chosen ones, may the Lord graciously bless this incense and accept its sweet odor: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The celebrant incenses the bread and wine, saying:

BLEST by thee, may this incense rise to thee, Lord, and bring down on us thy mercy.

The celebrant incenses the crucifix and the altar:

LIKE this incense, so let my prayer rise before thee, Lord, and let my upraised hands be like the evening offering. Lord, place a guard before my mouth, and at the gate of my lips a watch, lest my heart turn toward thoughts of evil and make excuse upon excuse to cover shameful deeds.

THE Lord enkindle in us the fire of his love and the flame of everlasting charity. Amen.

Finally the celebrant, the ministers, the clergy, and the people are incensed. For this act of reverence those seated rise and stand.

Washing of the Hands

Psalm 25:6–12

AMONG the pure of heart I wash my hands, Lord,
And gather with them around thy altar:

There to hear thy glories sung,
There to praise thy wondrous works.
I love thy house in all its beauty,
Lord, the place wherein thy splendor dwells.
Destroy not my soul with wicked men, God:
With men whose hands are stained with blood,
With men whose palms are fouled by deeds of greed.
Clear of wrong I go my way.
Lord, in thy mercy save me.
For now I walk on ways of upright deeds.
Among thy faithful shall I praise thee, Lord.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

ACCEPT graciously, most holy Trinity, this sacrificial gift. We offer it to thee in memory of the suffering, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of blessed Mary ever Virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of these, and of all the saints: To them let it bring honor, and to us salvation. May those whose memory we revere here on earth plead for us in heaven: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fellowship in Sacrifice

C. Brethren. pray that this sacrifice, mine

and yours, may be acceptable to God, the Father almighty.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice from your hands as a gift of praise and glory to his name, for our welfare also, and for that of his holy Church in all the world. *C.* Amen.

Silent Prayer

For the **Silent Prayer** *of the second Christmas Mass turn to p. 43, and for that of the third Mass to p. 51.*

LET the offering of this festal day be acceptable to thee, Lord. Grant us thy favor so that by this sacred interchange of the divine and human we may become like to him who united our human nature to his divine: who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. *R.* Amen.

C. Per omnia saecula saeculorum.

R. Amen.

THE CONSECRATION

WE PREPARE now for the most sacred part of the Mass: the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the altar he offers to his heavenly Father his most Sacred Body and his most Precious Blood in order to perpetuate his Sacrifice on the cross. The latter was his bloody, the former is his unbloody Sacrifice. Since the days of the Apostles this Sacrifice has been offered on Christian

altars according to the bidding of Christ: "Do this in remembrance of me."

Say the prayers that follow with special devotion. Say them today in the spirit of Christmas. The Son of God comes anew into our midst. He comes not in a visible manner, even as he was not visible as God when he appeared as an infant in Bethlehem. Then, the Lord God made himself present under the form of man; now, he makes himself present under the form of bread and wine. With the faith of Mary and Joseph, and that of the shepherds, adore him as your Lord and God.

The first prayer preparatory to his coming is one of praise and adoration:

The Preface

Rise for the greeting of the celebrant, and stand in the spirit of joy of that which awaits us.

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.
C. Raise up your hearts.
R. We have raised them to the Lord.
C. Let us thank the Lord our God.
R. That is proper and just.

PROPER, truly, it is and just, right and helpful for salvation that we give thanks, always and everywhere, to thee holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God. For, through the sacred wonder of the Word made flesh, thy glory reveals itself to us in new brightness.

God appeared to us in visible form in order to enkindle within us love for things invisible. Therefore, with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominations, and with all heavenly legions we chant an endless hymn in praise of thy glory, saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy art thou,
Lord of the heavenly legions.
Heaven and earth are filled with thy glory.
Praise to thee in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Praise to thee in the highest.

All remain standing until the bell has rung for the third time, and the* Holy, Holy, Holy *has been recited by the celebrant. Then all kneel, and remain kneeling until after the elevation of the chalice.

THE CANON OF THE MASS

EXCEPT for small changes on a few festive days, the prayers of the Canon are always the same. Hence, the word *canon,* meaning "a fixed rule," "norm," or "standard." Canon of the Mass: the fixed, normal, standard prayers of the Mass. These prayers culminate in the sacred words of consecration, in virtue of which the substance of the bread and wine are changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Prayer for the Church

NOW then, most kind Father, bowed low in humble reverence, we pray and beseech thee through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord: accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these holy, spotless offerings of sacrifice. We offer them to thee, first of all, for thy Holy, Catholic Church: be pleased to keep and guide her in peace and unity throughout all the world. Then, we offer them to thee for thy servant Pius, our Pope, and for our Bishop; and, finally, we offer them for all souls who truly believe and practice the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

Prayer for the Living

Here mention in silent prayer the living for whom you wish to pray.

BE MINDFUL, Lord, of thy servants whom we call to mind in prayer, and of all here present. For them, whose faith and fidelity are known to thee, we offer this sacrifice of praise, as they likewise offer it for themselves and their loved ones. May they save their souls, and may they be assured in their hope of safety and well-being, they who pay the homage of their gifts to thee, their eternal, living, and true God.

Prayer in Honor of the Saints

UNITED in holy fellowship, we celebrate this most sacred day on which blessed

Mary, her virginity untouched, brought the Saviour into the world. We give honor, first of all, to this glorious Mary ever Virgin, Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God. Then we reverence the memory of thy blessed Apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, and Thaddeus: of Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all thy saints. Grant that their merits and prayers may win for us in all things the favor of thy help and protection: through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Peace

HAND so, we pray thee, Lord, graciously accept this offering from the hands of thy servants and from thy whole congregation. Keep our days in thy peace, and command that we be preserved from eternal damnation and be numbered among the flock of thy chosen ones: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Most Sacred Moment of Holy Mass

WE PRAY thee, God, be pleased to bless this offering in its whole being: Make it worthy and acceptable by sealing it with thy approval so that it may become for our good the Body and Blood of thy dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ:

WHO, the day before he suffered death, took bread into his holy and adorable hands, having raised his eyes toward heaven to thee, God, his almighty Father, and thanking thee, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take you all, and eat of this:

FOR THIS IS MY BODY.

IN LIKE manner, after the meal, taking also this glorious chalice into his holy and adorable hands, and once more giving thanks to thee, he blessed it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take you all, and drink of this:

FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING TESTAMENT: THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND MANY OTHERS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.

As often as you will do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of me.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHURCH

All rise and remain standing up to and through the consumption of the Precious Blood by the celebrant.

IN A spirit of jubilation we have risen to our feet, our hearts exulting with joyous gratitude to our Lord for his sacramental presence on the altar. We stand in awe and reverence of the living Christ who, "having risen

from the dead, dies now no more": St. Paul to the Romans, 6:9. The Saviour lives, for, after his resurrection, he ascended gloriously into heaven. The Holy Eucharist is, in truth, a symbol and a pledge of our own resurrection. In testimony of this most impressive truth Holy Mother Church bids us, in her ceremonies, to rise and stand during this solemn part of the Mass including the Holy Communion of the celebrant.

NOW then, Lord, keeping in mind the blessed suffering of this same Christ, thy Son, our Lord, and also his resurrection from the tomb as well as his glorious ascension into heaven, both we thy servants and thy holy people offer to thy exalted majesty, out of the gifts bestowed on us, a clean sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, a spotless sacrifice: the sacred Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.

LOOK on them with the favor of thy kindly smile, and graciously accept them as thou wast pleased to accept the sacrificial gifts of thy good servant Abel, the sacrifice of our venerable forefather Abraham, and the holy sacrifice which, as a flawless gift, thy high priest Melchisedech offered to thee.

BOWING low in humility, we ask this of thee, almighty God: command thy holy angel to bring these our gifts up to thy altar on high, and to present them to thy

divine majesty. Grant that as many of us as take part in this sacrifice of the altar, and who shall have received the most Sacred Body and Blood of thy Son, may be filled with every blessing and heavenly grace: through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Faithful Departed

In a moment of silent prayer call to mind those of the faithful departed whom you wish to remember in your prayers in a special way.

BE MINDFUL also, Lord, of thy servants who, having gone before us signed with the sign of faith, now rest in the sleep of peace. To these, Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, grant in thy mercy, we implore thee, a place of serene repose in light and peace: through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Ourselves

TO US also, thy sinful servants, who place our trust in the countless graces of thy mercy, kindly grant some place in the company of thy holy Apostles and martyrs John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and of all thy saints. Count not our merits but, granting us pardon, admit us into their fellowship: through Christ our Lord.

THROUGH him, Lord, thou dost without ceasing create, make holy, endow with life, and bless all the good things thou dost bestow on us.

THROUGH him, and with him, and in him, thou, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, hast all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

C. Per omnia saecula saeculorum.

R. Amen.

THE COMMUNION

THE most precious fruit of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrament of love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through it he comes to us that he may abide in us, and we in him; he comes to us with all the love of his Sacred Heart. Today in Holy Communion, he gives himself to us as his Christmas gift.

What gift will you make in return? No gift will be more pleasing to him than if you, for your part, give yourself to him with a pure, humble heart, filled with a living faith and an ardent love. In this spirit, then, pray the Our Father, and all the prayers that follow preparatory to Holy Communion.

The Lord's Prayer

OREMUS: Let us pray.

Encouraged by our Saviour's bidding and instructed by his divine teaching, we make bold to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation:
R. But deliver us from evil.
C. Amen.

Prayers for Peace

DELIVER us, we pray thee, Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come. At the prayerful pleas of the blessed and glorious Mary ever Virgin, Mother of God, of thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, of Andrew, and of all the saints, may it please thee to give peace in our days. Aid us with thy merciful help so that we may be always free from sin, and may remain secure from all disorders: through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

C. Per omnia saecula saeculorum.
R. Amen.

Breaking of the Sacred Bread

IN A number of places the Sacred Scriptures simply call the rite of the Holy Sacrifice the "Breaking of the Bread." At the altar the celebrant breaks the Sacred Host in two, and from the portion in his left hand, breaks off a small particle: a symbol of the sufferings of our Lord. He now drops the particle into the chalice with the Precious Blood, a symbol of his resurrection: he who "was dead, behold, now lives forevermore," Apocalypse 1:18. The Holy Eucharist is, indeed, the surety of our resurrection and of peace in life everlasting.

The celebrant says:

C. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with you also.

MAY this consecrated mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ profit us who receive it for life everlasting. Amen.

LAMB of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.

Prayers Before Holy Communion

LORD Jesus Christ, thou hast said to thy Apostles: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Disregard my sins; regard however the faith of thy Church. In accordance with thy will graciously grant her peace and unity: who as God lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

In a solemn or pontifical High Mass the celebrant gives to the ministers at the altar the salutation of peace with the words:

C. Peace be with you.

R. And with you also.

The salutation is given in turn to the other ministers at the altar, and finally to the clergy who may be present.

LORD Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, obedient to the will of the Father, thou hast given, in co-operation with the Holy Spirit, life to the world by thy death. By this most holy Body and Blood of thine, rescue me from all my sins and from every evil. Make me hold fast at all times to thy commandments, and never permit me to be separated from thee: who, with the same God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns as God, world without end. Amen.

LET not the receiving of thy Body, Lord Jesus Christ, bold and unworthy though I am to partake of it, become for me the cause of a sentence of damnation. Rather let it bring to me through thy loving goodness the

benefits of security and healing for both soul and body: who as God lives and reigns with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

Communion of the Celebrant

Remain standing when the bell rings three times at the words: **Lord, I am not worthy.** *The Holy Eucharist is a pledge and guarantee of our rising with Christ to life eternal. The celebrant continues:*

I WILL take the bread of heaven, and call on the name of the Lord.

LORD, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: speak but one word, and my soul shall be healed. *Three times.*

THE Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul for life everlasting. Amen.

NOW shall I repay the Lord for all the good things he has given me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call on the name of the Lord. I cry out: Blessed be the Lord! And I am safe from my enemies.

THE Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul for life everlasting. Amen.

Communion of the Faithful

When the celebrant or deacon opens the tabernacle the faithful kneel, and remain kneeling during the distribution of Holy Communion. If, however, you are indisposed, or if the number of

communicants is very large, you may sit down. Other appropriate prayers before and after Holy Communion are found on pp. 54–59. Count the moments spent in prayer with our Lord as most precious. Recite the I confess to almighty God . . . *with a sincerely contrite heart:*

I CONFESS to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed. *Strike your breast three times, saying:* Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech the blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, Father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

C. Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. *R.* Amen.

C. May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of your sins. *R.* Amen.

THE celebrant bids you look at the Lamb of God, and says in the words of St. John the Baptist:

BEHOLD the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.

FULLY aware of your unworthiness to have the Lord visit you, say as you strike your breast:

LORD, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: speak but one word, and my soul shall be healed. Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: speak but one word, and my soul shall be healed.
Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: speak but one word, and my soul shall be healed.

THEN, with a prayer of welcome and love in your heart, receive your Lord and God as the celebrant gives you the Bread of heaven, saying:

THE Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul for life everlasting. Amen.

IF YOU do not communicate, show your desire by making a spiritual communion, and use the precious minutes granted you by reciting other prayers: the rosary, one of the litanies, invocations, pious reflections on one or the other of the prayers or Scripture readings of this Mass, prayers for yourself or for others. See pp. 60–64.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Kneel, unless age or infirmity prevent it.

THE Lord now dwells in your heart. He has come to you as your Saviour to bring you his precious gifts for soul and body, particularly today: For it is his birthday. He brings you his love of friendship. He is your best friend: welcome him as such. Give him also your love of friendship, and exclaim with St. Peter: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest well that I love thee."

As time permits bring to him out of the fullness of your heart prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and petition. For help turn to pp. 57–59.

After administering Holy Communion the celebrant returns to the altar for the liturgical prayers of thanksgiving of Holy Mass. The congregation may sit until after the Chant of Communion.

MAY we treasure in pure hearts, Lord, what we have taken with our mouths, and may the gift for temporal life renew us for eternal life.

May thy Body, Lord, which I have taken, and thy Blood which I have received, remain always in my heart. Never again let the stain of sin soil my soul now that I have been made new by this pure and holy sacrament: who lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

For the Chant of Communion *of the second Christmas Mass turn to p. 44, and for that of the third Mass to p. 51.*

CHANT OF COMMUNION Psalm 109:3

The celebrant now goes to the Epistle side and recites the Communion Antiphon, *which the choir chants:*

AMID the glorious light of heaven's holy sanctuary, even before the rising of the sun, I have begotten thee.

The celebrant now returns to the middle of the altar. All rise to receive his greeting:

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

FINAL PRAYER All remain standing

OREMUS: Let us pray: Lord our God, we rejoice in the celebration of these sacred rites in honor of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant, we beseech thee, that good conduct may make us worthy to attain to fellowship with him: who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

THE BLESSING

Stand to receive the greeting:

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.
C. Go: You are dismissed.
R. We give thanks to God.

MAY the tribute of my worship please thee, Holy Trinity. Let the sacrifice which I, though quite unworthy, have offered in the

sight of thy majesty be acceptable to thee, and grant that it may win the favors of thy gracious mercy for me and for those for whom I have offered it: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Kneel now for the blessing. Prelates only stand.

C. Almighty God bless you: The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *R.* Amen.

In a pontifical High Mass the bishop chants:

B. The name of the Lord be blessed.
R. From this day to all eternity.
B. Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R. Who made heaven and earth.
B. Almighty God bless you: The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
R. Amen.

The congregation now rises and stands. (*For the Last Gospel of the third Mass turn to p. 52.*)

LAST GOSPEL John 1:1–14

IN THE beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
In the beginning he was with God.
Through him all things were made,
and of all that was made,
nothing was made without him.

In him was the life,
and the life was the light of men.
And the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness understood it not.

There was a man, sent from God:
His name was John.
He came as a witness to testify to the light
so that through him all might believe.

He was not the light,
but only a witness of the light,
of that true light which enlightens
every soul that comes into the world.

He was in the world,
the world that he made,
and the world knew him not.
He came to his own,
and his own received him not.

But to as many as received him,
to those who believe in his name
he gave the power of becoming
children of God:

Who are born, not from the line of men,
not from the desires of the flesh,
not from the will of man,
but who are born from God.

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US.

We have seen his glory,
the glory of the only-begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.
R. Thanks be to God.

Blessed a thousand times has been the hour that you spent in prayer with your

Lord at this first Christmas Mass. Your heart is filled with happiness. Holy Mother Church wants to add to your Christmas joys. Therefore, she has given every priest the privilege of offering today three Holy Masses so that you may not be wanting in opportunities to spend blessed moments with our Lord on his birthday. Take the graces offered you: Go to another Mass.

Have you any special needs for body or soul? Yes. Well then, bring them to Jesus, our Lord and God, with trust in his infinite goodness: Assist at another Mass. "The Lord is good. Taste and prove it," you too will then cry out in agreement with the holy psalmist.

Do you wish to make a Christmas gift of priceless value to a loved one? Attend another Mass, and offer it for the person you love. "Charity is truly the royal road to peace, and the condition to man's happiness."

Do you know of someone who will not be able to attend a Christmas Mass? Someone who will neglect to go? Go to another Mass in their place. Peace of heart will be your reward. Listen: "Peace shall be awarded to everyone who does good." So wrote St. Paul to the Romans. Joy will flood your soul as never before. No Christmas in your life will have been better spent.

Christmas! "This is a holiday of the Lord's own choosing: greet this day with rejoicing, greet this day with triumph!" Psalm 117:24.

SECOND MASS AT DAWN

THE second Christmas Mass was celebrated at dawn in the ancient Church of St. Anastasia in Rome. Burned alive at Sirmium-Mitrowitz, Jugoslavia, December 25, 304, during the terrible persecution ordered by Emperor Diocletian (284–305), this saint, virgin and martyr, is honored in a special way in this Mass.

In this Mass also, celebrated when the light of day breaks on the earth, the eternal birth of the Son of God, the Light of Light, the Sun of Justice, is recalled to our minds in its various prayers and chants.

The temporal birth of the Saviour, however, is the central theme of the Christmas Masses. In different ways, therefore, his birth from the Blessed Virgin Mary is brought to our attention in the scriptural readings and prayers of this Mass.

Holy Mother Church gives us reason once more to thank God for his love in sending his only-begotten Son into the world to save us from sin.

Jesus Christ personifies the goodness and the kindness of God: his grace entitles us to the hope of inheriting the rich treasures of his eternal kingdom; his precious Sacrament, fruit of his Holy

Sacrifice, assures us of a new life if through it we strive to live in him.

Read the prayers of this Mass with earnest and loving devotion, and resolve to profit from them so that all your deeds will reflect the faith that you hold in your heart.

The order for a High Mass is the same for the congregation as prescribed in the first Christmas Mass. See p. 3. For a Low Mass, however, the general rule is to kneel. Exceptions: stand for the first and last Gospels; usage allows that all sit from the Offertory *to the beginning of the* Preface, *and again after* Holy Communion *to the* Chant of Communion *inclusive.*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. AMEN.

Turn to p. 4, and recite all the prayers until the celebrant ascends the altar for the Introit.

INTROIT Isaias 9:2–6

TODAY a light shines upon us: For our sakes the Lord is born. His name is: the Unexcelled Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the World to Come. His reign shall have no end. *Psalm 92:1.* The Lord, robed in vestments of splendor, rules as king. With might he has clothed and girded himself. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. *Repeat:* Today a light shines upon

us: for our sakes the Lord is born. His name is: the Unexcelled Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, Father of the World to Come. His reign shall have no end.

For the **Prayer of Mercy** *and the* **Gloria** *turn to pp. 7–8, after which the* **Proper Prayers, Epistle, Interlude,** *and* **Gospel** *are recited as follows:*

FIRST PRAYER Christmas

BATHED in the flood of the new light of the Word made flesh, we pray thee, almighty God, grant that the light of faith that shines in our souls may be reflected in our deeds: through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

SECOND PRAYER St. Anastasia

GRANT, we beseech thee, almighty God, that, celebrating the feast of the blessed martyr Anastasia, we may sense the effects of her pleading before thee: through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

EPISTLE Titus 3:4–7

DEARLY Beloved: When the kindness of God our Saviour and his great love for men appeared, he saved us not by reason of our good works but by virtue of his mercy.

Through the baptismal waters of rebirth he saved us, and through the grace of re-

newal of the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us with overflowing measure, thanks to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Thus made just by his grace, we are heirs with the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. *R.* Thanks be to God.

INTERLUDE Psalm 117:26, 27, 33

BLESSED is he who comes in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord: His light shines upon us. *V.* It is the work of the Lord: A work of wonder in our eyes. * Alleluia, alleluia. *V. Psalm 92:1.* The Lord, robed in vestments of splendor, rules as king. With might the Lord has clothed and girded himself.

GOSPEL Luke 2:15–20

C. From the holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

R. To thee, Lord, be glory.

AT THAT time the shepherds said one to another: Let us go to Bethlehem, and see for ourselves the things that the Lord through his message made known to us.

Going with haste, they found Mary and Joseph there, and the Child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they found confirmed what had been told them about this Child.

Now, all who heard the story of the shepherds were amazed. Mary, however, treasured up all that was said, and in her heart gave deep thought to all the sayings.

On their way home the shepherds gave praise and glory to God for all that they had heard and seen just as it had been told them. *R.* Praise be to thee, Christ.

C. May the words of the Gospel blot out our sins.

Turn to p. 13 for the Creed.

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

OFFERTORY CHANT Psalm 92:1–2

LET us pray: God built the solid earth. Ere the world began, God, thy throne stood firm. Thou art from all eternity.

For the Prayers of Offering *turn to pp. 15–16.*

SILENT PRAYER Christmas

WE PRAY thee, Lord, grant that our offerings may prove fitting for the sacred rites of this birthday feast, and may shower on us enduring peace. Let these earthly offerings bring us that which is divine, even as he who was born as man shone forth also as God: through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER St. Anastasia

WE PRAY thee, Lord, accept these gifts of sacrifice justly offered thee, and grant that through the pleading merits of thy blessed martyr Anastasia they may serve to

advance our salvation: through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

CHANT OF COMMUNION Zacharias 9:9

SING hymns of joy, O daughter Sion! Songs of jubilation, O daughter Jerusalem! See, thy King comes, the Holy One, the Saviour of the world.

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

FINAL PRAYER Christmas

LET us pray: Lord, may the newborn life obtained from this Sacrament restore us now and always in him who by his miraculous birth did away with the old life of sin: through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

FINAL PRAYER St. Anastasia

LET us pray: Lord, thou hast feasted thy family with holy gifts. Keep us ever in good cheer, we beseech thee, through the intercession of her whose feast we celebrate: through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

For the **Blessing** *and the* **Last Gospel** *turn to p. 35 ff.*

A Gift for Jesus

Christmas joy fills your heart. Rightly so. You have spent happy moments with our Lord on his birthday. From all your heart thank him for it.

How can you do that best? By assisting at another Mass. Be generous with your Lord and God. Make the sacrifice. The Lord will love you for it. Can anything be more precious than his love?

Make the sacrifice for your own sake. Let this Christmas be the happiest one you ever spent. But spend it with our Lord. He will make you full of gladness; his delights will endure with you forever. Psalm 15, 1.

Make the sacrifice for your Lord and God. He has been good to you in a thousand different ways. Return his love for you by showing your love for him: attend another Mass — his Sacrifice of praise and adoration, his Sacrifice of atonement and petition. Give him this Christmas gift out of a loving and generous heart.

Keep holiday with the Lord, and he will fill your heart brimful with his joy and peace. No Christmas in all your life will have been like this one: It is good to be with the Lord. His peace be with you.

THIRD MASS IN THE FORENOON

MORE than nineteen hundred years ago the Son of God, the eternal Word by whom all things were made, descended from heaven and, taking our human nature, dwelt among us. He came to save us from the slavery of sin and to raise fallen human nature to new levels of dignity. From him derives the worth of a human person, invested with precious rights and freedoms. With the coming of the Saviour a new civilization began.

Think of this as you recite the prayers of this Christmas Mass, and as you read the selected passages from the Scriptures. Thank him for his graces, precious beyond all price, that you might have a share in his divine life. Our Lord Jesus Christ chose to have a share in our human life by joining to his person our human nature.

Abide then in his life. Abide in his love. How? By keeping his commandments. So live Christ in your life that you may say with St. Paul: "No longer is it I that live but Christ lives in me." Be resolved to sin no more. Our Lord will help you. Trust in his mercy, in his goodness, in his power. Be resolved to lead an honorable Christian life; be re-

solved to show yourself in all things an example of good works, faithful to all your duties toward God and his Church, toward yourself and your fellow men. "Grace and peace from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus our Saviour" be with you on this Christmas day.

The order for a High Mass is the same for the congregation as prescribed in the first Christmas Mass. See p. 3. For a Low Mass, however, the general rule is to kneel. Exceptions: stand for the first and last Gospels; usage allows that all sit from the Offertory *to the beginning of the* Preface, *and again after* Holy Communion *to the* Chant of Communion *inclusive.*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. AMEN.

Turn to p. 4, and recite all the prayers until the celebrant ascends the altar for the Introit.

INTROIT Isaias 9:6

FOR our sakes a child is born, for our sakes a son is given. Royal rule rests on his shoulders, and his name shall be: Messenger of Great Counsel. *Psalm 47:1.* Sing a new song for the Lord: Wonderful are his works. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. *Repeat:* For our sakes a child is born, for our sakes a Son is given. Royal rule rests on his shoulders, and his name shall be: Messenger of Great Counsel.

For the **Prayer of Mercy** *and the* **Gloria** *turn to pp. 7–8, after which the* **First Prayer, Epistle, Interlude,** *and* **Gospel** *are recited as follows:*

FIRST PRAYER

WE PRAY thee, almighty God, grant that the new birth of thy only-begotten Son in the flesh may free us from the old slavery that binds us fast under the yoke of sin: through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

EPISTLE Hebrews 1:1–12

IN DAYS past, at different times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

Now at last, in these times he has spoken to us by his Son. Having made the universe through him, he made his Son heir of all things. The image of his Father's being, he mirrors the splendor of his glory. Through the almighty power of his word he sustains the universe. Having made atonement for our sins, the Son now sits on high at the right hand of God's majesty, so superior to the angels as the name that he inherited is superior to theirs.

Indeed, did God say to any of his angels: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? Again, did he say to any of them: I am to him a Father, and, he is to me a Son? Now, when he brings his first-born into the

world, he says: Let all the angels of God adore him. Of his angels, however, he merely says: He makes his angels messengers, swift as the winds, makes them servants, fleet as flames of fire.

Of his Son, on the contrary, he says: Thy throne, God, stands forevermore. Justice is the sovereign authority in thy kingdom. Thou lovest what is right, and hatest what is wrong. For this reason thy God anointed thee, God, with the festal oil of coronation that thou rule as king over thy fellows. Again he said of the Son: In the beginning, Lord, thou hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They will pass away, but thou wilt remain. All will become old as does a garment, and like a garment thou wilt put them aside, exchanging the old for the new. Thou, however, art ever the same, and thy years shall have no end. *R.* Thanks be to God.

INTERLUDE Psalm 97:3–4, 2

THE very ends of the earth see the work of salvation of our God. Let all the earth sing hymns of joy to God. *V.* The Lord has made known his work of salvation, and to all nations has he revealed his justice. * Alleluia, alleluia. *V.* A blessed day has dawned on us. Come, nations, and adore the Lord: For on this day the great Light came down upon the earth. Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 1:14

C. From the holy Gospel according to St. John.

R. To thee, Lord, be glory.

IN THE beginning was the Word, and the word was with God: And God was the Word. In the beginning he was with God.

Through him all things were made, and of all that was made, nothing was made without him.

In him was the life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness understood it not.

There was a man sent from God: His name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light so that through him all might believe.

He was not the light, but only a witness of the light, of that true light which enlightens every soul that comes into the world.

He was in the world, the world that he made, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not.

But to as many as received him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the power of becoming children of God:

Who are born, not from the line of men, not from the desires of the flesh, not from the will of man, but who are born from God.

Genuflect

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. *R.* Praise be to thee, Christ. *C.* May the words of the Gospel blot out our sins.

Turn to p. 13 for the Creed.

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

OFFERTORY CHANT Psalm 88:12, 15

LET us pray: Thine are the heavens, and thine the earth: For thou hast made the universe and all that it contains. Justice and right support thy throne.

For the Prayers of Offering *turn to pp. 15–16.*

SILENT PRAYER

LORD, by the new birth of thy only-begotten Son, make holy the gifts we offer thee and cleanse us from the stains of our sins: through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

Turn to pp. 20 ff for the Preface, *and for the prayers of the* Canon *and the* Communion.

CHANT OF COMMUNION Psalm 97:3

ALL the ends of the earth have seen the work of salvation of our God.

C. The Lord be with you.
R. And with you also.

FINAL PRAYER

LET us pray: We beseech thee, almighty God, grant that the Saviour, born today, who is the Author of our rebirth in God, may be to us also the Giver of life immortal: who as God lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

For the **Blessing** *turn to p. 35.*

LAST GOSPEL Matthew 2:1–12

WHEN, in the days of King Herod, Jesus was born at Bethlehem, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, and asked: Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East and have come to pay him our respects.

Hearing this, King Herod was troubled, and Jerusalem with him. So he called together the chief priests and, from among the people, men learned in the Scriptures to inquire of them where Christ would be born. They replied: At Bethlehem in Juda, for the prophet has written: And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art by no means the least among the prince-cities of Juda since out of thee will arise a leader who will rule my people Israel.

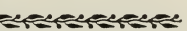
Thereupon Herod had the wise men come to him in secret in order to question them closely as to the time when the star had

appeared to them. Then, sending them on their way to Bethlehem, he said: Go and search carefully for the child, and, when you have found him, send me word so that I too may come to do him honor.

Having heard what the King said, they went their way. Suddenly, the star that they had seen in the East reappeared and led the way until it stopped over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star again, they were exceedingly happy.

Entering the house they found the Child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him. *All genuflect.* From their stores of treasures they gave him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Afterward, admonished in a dream not to return to Herod, they went by another way to their homeland. *R.* Thanks be to God.



CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

Lord Jesus, by being born in time and becoming a child, thou wast pleased to make the greatness of thy divine and human being little. Let us learn that there is infinite wisdom in the silence of a child, power in weakness, majesty in lowliness; grant that after adoring thee in thy lowly state we may enjoy thy glory in heaven. Amen.

Divine Infant Jesus, out of love for us thou hast made thyself a little child, and hast brought thyself to a poor and humble

manger. I love thee, I adore thee. As thou didst purify the shepherds and wise men so also purify me that I may be willing to hear thy word. Grant me a share in the merits of thy childhood by making my heart as loving and as simple as that of a child. Amen.

PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

RECEIVE your Lord and God with the pure joy of the angels of Bethlehem, the simple faith of the shepherds, the holy love of Mary and Joseph. Prepare your heart for the coming of the Lord, and say:

An Act of Faith

Jesus, I believe all that thou hast revealed, and especially do I believe thy holy word that thou art the living bread that has come down from heaven to be food for my soul. I believe that thou art present in this most sacred sacrament with thy flesh and blood: Thou my Lord and my God. Grant me the simple, unaffected, unquestioning faith of the shepherds who saw thee only as a Babe in swaddling clothes but adored thee as their Saviour and their King. Jesus, take my faith, strengthen and increase it: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. Thou alone hast the words of eternal life. Amen.

Recite once more the **Creed** *with devout attention. Turn to p. 13.*

An Act of Hope

Jesus, I come to thee with the eager hope of the wise men from the East. They sought thee out; they found thee; their hope in thee was rewarded. Behold, I too come to thee, my hope and my refuge, to receive from thee salvation. I need thee. Many are my sins. With St. Peter I should cry out: Lord, depart from me for I am a sinful man. And yet, if I come not to thee, where shall I go? Jesus, I put my full trust in thy goodness, in thy mercy, in the power of thy forgiveness. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on me. Amen.

An Act of Sorrow

Jesus, I am sincerely sorry for all my sins. Often I offended thee in thought, word, and deed. In thy mercy forgive me. Take my sins and consume them in the fiery furnace of thy love. I resolve with the help of thy grace never to sin again. Accept my good will, and then grant peace to my soul, the peace that was announced by thy angels on the night that thou wast born: "Peace on earth to men of good will." My Jesus mercy: be to me not a Judge but a Saviour. Amen.

Recite again **I confess to almighty God** *in the spirit of humble penance, p. 32.*

An Act of Humility

Jesus, unworthy sinner that I am, I dare

to come to thee because thou hast invited me: Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give thee rest. In humility of spirit I kneel before thee: Speak but one word, and my soul shall be healed. Grant that this Holy Communion will take from me all impurities of sin, cleanse all my thoughts and all my desires, help me to do only what pleases thee, and protect me in soul and body against the snares of the enemy. Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine. Amen.

An Act of Love

Jesus, I love thee with all my heart and all my soul. I love thee with the holy love of Mary and Joseph. Now that I am about to receive thee, enkindle in my heart the fire of thy love and the flame of eternal charity. Jesus, let me live and die in thy love. Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may love thee more and more. Heart of Jesus, burning with love of me, inflame my heart with love of thee. Sweet heart of Jesus be my love. Let thy love take full possession of my heart. I want to be thine now and forever. Jesus, I live for thee; Jesus, I die for thee; Jesus, I am thine in life and death. Amen.

As you await your turn to receive our Lord, let your thoughts dwell with him, and repeat over and over again your love for him. And as the priest places the Sacred Host on your tongue say with deep fervor in your heart:

May the body and blood of my Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul for life eternal. Amen.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

An Act of Adoration

Jesus, my God and my all, thou hast come to me. I am happy beyond all words that thou art with me. In union with the shepherds who hastened to visit thee in Bethlehem, kneeling before thee, I adore thee, my Lord and my God. To thee I give myself with all that I possess; keep me and bring me to life everlasting. Amen.

In the spirit of adoration recite once more the Preface, *p. 20.*

An Act of Gratitude

Jesus, how can I thank thee sufficiently for the great favor with which thou hast blessed me! Not for any merits of mine, but solely out of love for me thou hast given thyself to me. No gift on this Christmas Day could be more precious. From all my heart I thank thee. Deeply grateful to thee for thy goodness to me, I consecrate to thee all my thoughts and desires, all my words and works, all that I have, all that I am. Grant that I may ever be mindful of thee in my prayers, diligent in doing my duties, kind toward all, faithful to my friends, forgiving toward my enemies, patient in suffer-

ing, temperate, modest, pure, and upright in all my conduct. Amen.

Give praise and thanksgiving to the Lord by reciting with a joyful heart the Gloria, *p. 8.*

An Act of Offering

Jesus, thou hast given thyself to me: Behold, I give myself to thee. I desire to remain forever thine — thy servant, yes, thy friend, faithful, loyal, and true to the end. Take all that I have, though it be little and imperfect: make it better, make it holy. I desire only that thou be pleased with me. From all my heart I offer thee the gold of my love, the frankincense of my devotion, the myrrh of my sufferings. Take, Lord, all my liberty, take my memory, my reason, and my will. Thou hast given me all that I am and all that I possess. Let me return all to thee that thou mayest do with it according to thy will. Give me only thy love and thy grace: With these I shall be rich, and have no more to desire. Amen.

An Act of Petition

Jesus, thou hast come to me as my best of friends. Also to me thou hast said: No longer do I call you servant, I call you friend. Let thy friendship spur me on to pattern my life after thine. Make me more faithful in all my duties, more attentive to my daily prayers, more steadfast in my resolutions. Preserve in me a heart that is pure and chaste because thou lovest to dwell with the clean

of heart. Graciously accept my prayers for others: for our Holy Father, our bishop, our pastor, and all our priests, and especially for those who stand today in greatest danger. I pray, too, for the needs of my parents, brothers, sisters, and for all those who are dear to me. I pray for all those who are good to me, and likewise for all who have begged me to remember them before thee, whether they live still in the flesh or whether they have already been called out of this world. Amen.

Retire into the quiet chambers of your heart, and there talk over your needs and problems with our Lord. Talk to him as a friend to a friend. The moments after Holy Communion are precious moments: Do not hurry away from church. There is much that you will want to tell our Lord about yourself and about those you love.

Prayer to Jesus Crucified

A plenary indulgence may be gained if you recite this prayer before an image of Jesus Crucified, receive Holy Communion, and say a prayer of your choice according to the intentions of our Holy Father.

Good and dearest Jesus, behold, I cast myself on my knees before thee, and with all the fervor of my heart pray and beseech thee: Burn deep into my heart strong sentiments of faith, hope, and charity: sentiments, too, of a true sorrow for my sins together with the most firm will never to sin again. Meanwhile, with sincere sympathy and grief of soul, I bring before my eyes thy five wounds, and, dwelling on them in my mind, recall the words which David thy Prophet

long ago put on thy lips, good Jesus: They have pierced my hands and my feet; they counted all my bones. Amen.

Spiritual Communion

Jesus, thou art as truly present in the holy tabernacle as thou wast present in the manger at Bethlehem. My soul thirsts for thee as does the deer for refreshing waters. My heart longs for thy love: I know that thou lovest me, and therefore I dare to ask a big favor of thee. Come to me with thy grace since at this moment I cannot receive thee in thy sacrament. Visit my heart, and remain with me always. Above all grant me the precious grace that I may receive thee in the sacrament of thy love before life's last hour has come. Jesus, thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love thee, and that I wish to be with thee for all eternity. Jesus, I live for thee; Jesus, I die for thee; Jesus, I am thine in life and in death. Amen.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

For Our Holy Father

O Jesus, eternal Shepherd, look with kindly favor on our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, whom thou hast been pleased to appoint in thy place as supreme shepherd of thy flock. Bestow on him health and happiness; guard him against the evil attacks of his enemies; crown his work for

peace with success; and grant that he, together with us his flock, may prosper under thy blessing: thou who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

For Our Bishop

Almighty, eternal God, thou hast given us as shepherd our beloved bishop. Keep him ever in thy love; protect him everywhere against all harm of soul and body; and let thy blessing never cease to fall on him so that, united with thee in perpetual charity, he may bring forth much fruit for life everlasting: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Our Pastor

Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord, we adore thee and thank thee for the manifold priestly services rendered us in thy holy name by our beloved pastor. We pray thee, divine Shepherd of shepherds, reward him with thy holy gifts for soul and body; fill his daily work with the joys of thy priesthood; and grant that, having ministered with loving zeal to our spiritual needs on earth, he may one day possess with us, his flock, thy joys and thy peace in heaven: thou who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

For Parents

In this, as well as in some of the prayers that follow, change the phrases to the singular if the prayer is said for one person only.

My Lord and my God, it is thy holy will that I honor my father and mother. Give me

the grace, I pray thee, to respect them at all times and in all places. In thy goodness help me ever to be their obedient and loving child. Bless them with continuous health of mind and body; fill their lives with thy precious gifts of earth and heaven. Grant them happiness and security in their old age. And as for me, their child, guide my steps so that I may some day share with them the joys of heaven: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Parents for Their Children

Almighty and merciful God, our Father in heaven, thou hast created us for thy greater honor and glory: Thou hast destined us for eternal life. We thank thee, Lord, for the children thou hast given us and for the privilege of teaching them to know, serve, and love thee. Bless them in soul and body; protect them with thy loving hand amid all the perils on their way through life; guide their every step, and let thy grace go before and after them; keep them loyal until death to thee and thy Church; be a light to them so that they may know best how to serve thee with steadfast faith, and thus merit eternal salvation. Rouse us to a better life so that by our example we may teach them to advance in virtue. Distrustful of our weakness, we need thy constant grace, Lord, for the faithful fulfillment of our holy obligations of parenthood: guard us against the

temptations of a wicked world and make us ever hold fast to thy holy law. We beseech thee, kind and merciful Father, grant us daily thy heavenly aid that we never fail in our duty, and may one day, with our children, praise thee forever in heaven: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Sick

O God, wonderful is thy power over human infirmity. Spent by anxiety, I beseech thee, hear my prayer for thy sick servants: Do not let me plead in vain; in thy loving kindness change my fears to joy by bringing thy healing help to them so that with health restored they may praise thy holy name, and united with them we may give thanks to thee for thy merciful goodness: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Deceased Parents

O God, thou hast commanded us to honor father and mother. Bestow thy gracious mercy on their souls, forgive them their sins, and grant me the precious grace of seeing them some day in the glorious land of the living, united in fellowship with him in whom we have hoped and believed: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Friends

O God, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit thou hast poured thy gift of charity into the hearts of thy faithful. Grant to my

friends for whom I implore thy mercy health of mind and body, peace and prosperity, so that they may love thee with all their heart and may out of the fullness of their love do whatever things are pleasing to thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Benefactors

O God, I offer thee the wishes, intentions, and needs of all those who have been good to me or to others, whether this life still holds them in the flesh, or the next has already received them. May it please thee to reward them on this earth with thy holy gifts, and in heaven with the joys of life eternal: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Brotherly Love

Lord, God of perfect charity, in thy loving kindness hear my prayer which I offer thee for those who have in any way wronged, grieved, or abused me; or, whom I have at any time, knowingly or unknowingly, offended, injured, troubled, or scandalized by word or deed. May it please thee to forgive us all our sins of unkindness, indignation, and anger. Refine our thoughts and deeds with the fire of thy charity, and remove from our hearts all envy and jealousy, bitterness and enmity, and whatever else may hinder us from becoming possessors of thy sweet cordial of brotherly love: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB AND TREE

The prayers may be said by the Father or Mother. In the little procession formed by the children, the youngest is allowed to place the figure of the Christ Child in the manger. The tree lights should not burn until the blessing of the tree begins.

All sing: HOLY NIGHT.

Father: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Father: *Let us pray.* Almighty, everlasting God, pour down your blessings on this Crib, which we have set up in memory of the Birth of your Divine Son, Jesus Christ (he sprinkles the crib with holy water). Help us to remember, we beg you, each time we look at it, that Jesus came down to us at Bethlehem because He loved us. Let it remind us, too, O Heavenly Father, that the presents we give and those we receive, are given and received in memory of His love. Give peace to our home, O Lord, and peace to the world, so that we may live with our own family and with all men in happiness; through the same Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and rules with you in union with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

All sing: AWAY IN A MANGER, or some other hymn, while moving to the tree.

Father: O Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly beg you to bless this tree (he sprinkles it with holy water) which we have decorated with ornaments and lights in honor of your birth in Bethlehem. Grant that our souls may also wear the ornaments of good deeds; and make the light of virtue shine in us, so that we may draw all men to you. Amen.

All sing: O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL, or some other well-known hymn.

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